The People's Protector, The Huntsmen's Bane

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Huntsmen. The sworn protectors of the light... but only when they feel like it. That's a lesson Jaune learned on the day his father died. Yet, that was also the day his whole life changed. That's when he met Bruce Wayne and trained under him to become the new Batman. From then on, the people began to see this new Batman as their true protector. But what happens when Salem notices?

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Introduction

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Chapter 1

Vale

Midnight

'SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!' A robber thought as he ran down the street.

Sweat dripped down the robber's forehead, and goosebumps formed on his skin. With each step he took, his heart thudded against his chest like a drum. His hands felt clammy, while his legs felt like lead from how tired he was from running. Every snap, cricket chirping, or owl hooting caused his head to snap in that direction as his hearing was much more sensitive from the adrenaline coursing through his body.

'Need a place to hide. Need a place to hide.' The robber thought, taking a moment to figure out his location.

Despite being in one of Vale's more populous places, there was no one else in sight. His only companion was the shattered moon, casting its luminous light on him. Yet, while most found solace from the darkness because of it, the robber saw it more as a spotlight he gravely wanted to escape from. It reminded him only of his impending doom if he did not manage to find refuge.

Panting, the robber took a random direction in the slim hope it would lead to salvation. Grabbing the flap of his trench coat, he looked inside to check if he still had his stolen goods. He then looked at his waist and felt some relief that his gun was still there. While the

robber could have wielded it, he knew he would lose it in seconds because of his shaky hands. Plus, there was no pointing in firing if he didn't know where his pursuer was.

'Okay. I think I lost him.' The robber said after a moment of not hearing anything.

Stopping, the robber placed his hands on his thighs as he tried to catch his breath and slow his beating heart. Yet, he took off like a bat out of hell when something whizzed past his head and embedded itself into the concrete building next to him. The robber didn't even need to see it to know what it was.

Gulping, the robber willed his legs to go faster and faster. Feeling his eyes starting to sting, the robber brought his arm up to clean his face. No sooner than he did, he heard a wooshing sound from above. Looking up, the robber saw a black blur moving across the rooftops before seemingly flying to the buildings on the other side of the street. Yet, the blur vanished before he could even think of pulling out his gun.

'He's toying with me. I have to-WAIT! That's it!'

The robber felt a light bulb go off in his head when he remembered that this place used to belong to the Xiong Family before Torchwick came into power. While not common knowledge, the robber knew that the Xiong Long had a couple of secret bases scattered around Vale to use to hide out until the heat died down. Luckily, while most were destroyed after being found, some were still standing, and he just so happened to be near one.

Turning a corner, the robber headed toward the edge of the red-light district. After a few moments, he arrived and stopped in front of an alleyway behind an abandoned restaurant. The robber pulled out his gun before running down the alleyway. Reaching some green dumpsters, he pushed them to the side with all his might to reveal a hidden trap door underneath.

"Okay. I just need to wait until-" The robber began, reaching for the lever. Yet, right before he could grab it, someone grabbed his wrist in a near-bone-crushing grip. Then, before the robber could even process anything, the unwanted person threw him over his shoulder toward some barrels. The crash caused the robber to feel immense pain in his back. "Ow."

Groaning, the robber rolled away from the barrels and onto the ground. He then looked up and felt a cold shiver go down his spine when his eyes settled on the familiar figure. Yet, while so familiar, it was also so unfamiliar and a thousand times more blood-curling.

It was the new Batman.

"STAY BACK!" The robber shouted, getting up and pulling out his gun.

But the new Batman simply kept walking forward at an intimidatingly slow pace. Feeling his nerves reach their peak, the robber fired off everything he had. Yet, all the bullets harmlessly bounced off Batman's suit as he kept approaching the robber. Once they were less than a foot apart, the new Batman finally stopped, with the robber's gun making the dry fire sound a second later. He then stopped pulling the trigger yet kept the pistol aimed at the new Batman's head. The new Batman raised his right arm, opened his hand to reveal that his fingers were like claws now, and then used them to slice the pistol into pieces that clattered to the floor.

"Uh..." The robber said, unsure of what to do next.

Figuring he had nothing left to lose, the robber tried to throw a wild haymaker at the new Batman. Yet, the new Batman effortlessly blocked the attack and parried with a right cross. With the robber dazed, the new Batman grabbed the robber's arm, turned around, and slammed it against his shoulder with enough force to break the elbow joint, causing the robber to yell out in excruciating pain. He then threw the robber at the brick wall. The robber let out a gasp as

all the air left his body from the impact. He slowly slid down, revealing the impression on the wall.

The new Batman walked up to the robber, who was sitting on the ground, supposedly knocked out from the impact. For the next two minutes, the new Batman stared down at the robber, unflinching and unmoving, with a fierce glare. After another two moments, the robber's eyes snapped open as he got up and lunged at the new Batman. Yet, it backfired on him, as the new Batman quickly kicked him with enough force that it sent him flying to the dumpster. The robber groaned, his vision blurry and fading from his head, hitting the dumpster with enough force to dent it.

"Why?" The robber muttered before passing out.

"Many reasons." The new Batman answered in what sounded like a forced neutral tone.

Walking over to the robber, the new Batman inspected him to see if he still had what he had stolen. After a few seconds, he found it in the trench coat's inside pocket. But the new Batman also found something else that was slightly off for what a street punk would steal. Figuring it would be best to check it out, he hooked it to his belt. Once it was secured, the new Batman looked around the alleyway and spotted a fire escape with the ladder conveniently down nearby. Taking out a special Batarang, he used it to tie up the robber before shooting it toward the fire escape to hoist him up.

'Better than your first couple of encounters. You still need a lot of work, though.' A voice said over the personal communicator.

"True." The new Batman said as he ensured the robber wouldn't escape. "And aren't you supposed to be asleep at this time?"

'Who really sleeps anymore?'

"Hardly anyone nowadays with all this unchecked crime on the rise that the-"

'Don't.'

"Right. Anyway. I'm heading back to the Batcave now. I need to look into a few things."

'Like what?'

"Found something on the robber that most low-level thugs wouldn't typically go for. Plus, the store he probably stole it from wouldn't typically carry one. So why was it even there in the first place."

'Do you know what it is? And why the store had it in the first plae?'

"No. My best guess would be that it involves dust, and that's about it."

'Alright. I'll be here waiting for your arrival.'

"Like you ever leave the Batcave." The new Batman said, turning off the communicator.

Sighing, the new Batman took out a special device that would alert the police to the subdued robber's position to arrest him. With that done, he looked around to ensure there were no witnesses. He then walked to the center of the street to a manhole cover, removed it, and then jumped in. With a splash, he landed in the water, took out a torch, and made his way to the Batcave.

One Hour Later

Batcave

"I genuinely wonder how Alfred managed to keep this entire place clean." The new Batman said as he entered the Batcave.

"Even after working for me for so many years before his passing, there were still so many things I did not know about him." Bruce

Wayne said as he swiveled his chair around to face his apprentice and successor. "You did acceptable tonight, kid."

"I still have a long way to go, Bruce." The new Batman said as he walked over to the storage pods where he and Bruce keep their suits when not in use. Once there, he pressed a button to have the pod open up, allowing steam from inside to spill out. He then took off his mask to reveal a youthful male face with shaggy blonde hair and ocean-blue eyes. "A long way."

"You do. You're still sloppy in so many ways. But don't worry, Jaune." Bruce said, his tone slightly softer. "It'll come in time. After all, it took me twelve years to get where I was when I first took the mantle of Batman."

"But we don't have that much time. Something is coming. There's something on the horizon. And I fear if I don't push myself, I won't be ready for when it finally arrives."

"It's true that something is on the horizon. That's why we are training every chance we get." Bruce said, getting up from his chair and walking over to Jaune. "But we cannot rush it. We must go at the right pace; otherwise, all of this would have been for naught."

"Right." Jaune sighed. He knew he had a long way to go in order to be ready for what was coming and to truly become the next Batman. Yet, he also knew they could not rush things, especially his training.

"Besides, you forget. There is always something on the horizon. And there is *ALWAYS* something behind that one."

"As such, we must focus on the current one but prepare for the one right after." Jaune finished, recalling some of the lessons and stories Bruce told him when he first started training to become the new Batman.

"That's right. Besides, nobody ever truly finishes their training, as they always learning. And no one is ever truly prepared for

everything or for a single scenario. Not even me." Bruce said, grabbing the device Jaune took from the robber before bringing it over to his computer. "There is always an unforeseen factor. And no two scenarios are ever one hundred percent the same. You just have to be willing to adapt at a moment's notice and be ready to face whatever it is."

"True. I just hope I will be in time."

"You will be." Bruce said, sitting at his computer. "Now, go home. Get some rest. Your mother called worried, and you have class tomorrow."

"Right after, I analyze what this is and figure out why the robber took it and why the store-"

"Now."

"And don't even try arguing against him. You know you would have better luck trying to convince the Council to give all their money to charity." Another voice said. Turning to where it came from, Jaune and Bruce saw a female the same age as Jaune enter the room. She had dark skin, short pink hair, black eyes, and wore black pants and a yellow shirt with a black stripe at the neckline. "Besides, I doubt you want to fall asleep during Roux's class tomorrow. You know he gives extra homework for people who don't pay attention during his class."

"Hey, Max. And you're right. I don't feel like getting extra homework." Jaune said before letting out a yawn. "Plus, having a full night's rest sounds blissful, and not micro naps sounds like heaven right now."

"We'll never understand how you managed to keep that streak up for years, Bruce." Max said.

"Admittingly, micro naps were not the best in the long term or for getting sufficient rest. But it did help me keep my senses and mind sharp." Bruce said.

"See you tomorrow, Jaune." Max said, approaching Jaune. "And don't worry about the device. I'll scan and run some tests on it before heading to bed myself."

"And I'll look into the store the robber stole it from. What was its name?" Bruce asked, activating his computer.

"Federated Commonwealth Market." Jaune answered, causing Bruce to nod before getting to work. Shaking his head, Jaune turned back to Max. And before he could say anything, she leaned in and kissed his cheek.

"See you tomorrow, Jaune." Max said, stepping back.

"Right. See you in class tomorrow, Max. See you, Bruce. And don't forget to take your medication." Jaune said, receiving a smile from Max and a slight nod from Bruce. With a final glance, Jaune kissed Max before exiting the Batcave. Max smiled before heading to the computer and getting to work on finding out anything she could about the device and why the robber stole it.

One Hour Later

Arc Residence

'I don't think I will ever be able to function on so little sleep like Bruce does.' Jaune thought as he opened his bedroom window.

Thankfully, one of the earliest lessons Bruce had taught him was how to scale walls and buildings, as his room was on the second floor. Entering his room, Jaune pressed a button on the Batarang for it to retract the rope. He then closed the window before changing out of his 'work' suit and into his pajamas. While Jaune would have preferred to take a shower, he figured he could take one once he woke up.

'Ahhh. That feels amazing.' Jaune thought as he lay on his bed.

Even though the matres was a bit stiff and old, it still felt like heaven to Jaune's aching and tired body. However, after a moment, he reached into the nightstand drawer and pulled out a small journal. Unlocking it, Jaune flipped through the pages to where he kept a neatly folded picture. Taking it, he unfolded it to reveal a photo of his family.

Despite the years that had gone by since that day, Jaune still remembered it like it was yesterday. His father had just returned from a successful mission as a huntsman when his mother said they should take a family photo. She didn't even give him a chance to take off his armor. It was one of the few reminders Jaune had of how his life was before everything changed.

But life was cruel.

Real cruel.

"I don't know where you are, Dad. I just hope you are resting and are at peace. And don't worry about Mom and the others. I'll protect them." Jaune said as he recalled how drastically his life had changed in only a year.

One Year Ago

'Why? Why? Just why?' Jaune thought, upset, annoyed, and barely holding back some tears. Sighing, Jaune laid his head on the bullhead's wall. *'And to think this day started off so well.'*

Closing his eyes, Jaune thought back to how the day had started. First, he had a rare, whole night's sleep that wasn't disrupted by one of his sisters' pranks. Then, after a quick shower and heading down the stairs to the kitchen, Jaune saw that his mother had made everyone's favorite breakfast. When asked, his mother announced that their father had finally finished his huntsman business trip and was returning home today. Yet, unlike his other meetings, this was his final one, and he would be staying with them from now on and wouldn't ever leave on business again. After finishing breakfast,

Jaune told his family that he would be gone for most of the day since he was hanging out with school friends despite not having any. Yet, Jaune was thankful they believed him as, in reality, he was heading to the prestigious Beacon Academy to start following his dream of becoming a huntsman to protect his family and others. And as he left, he took some of his father's spare armor that looked comfortable to wear and the family's signature weapon: Crocea Mors.

'Protectors of the light, and they didn't do anything to help.' Jaune thought, rolling up his sleeves to see the black and blue bruises on his arms.

After leaving the house, Jaune had made his way to the bullheads. Yet, as soon as he was halfway there, he was mugged by some thugs. Since he had no combat experience, Jaune didn't last a second before landing on his ass with a pistol pointed at his head. And the only reason why he managed to keep his life and possessions was because some retired MMA fights came to his rescue. Yet, what stung Jaune the most was how some huntsmen saw the fight but walked off, saying his plight was beneath their notice.

'I honestly should have seen this coming. I mean, others trained since they were probably six to get into Beacon. But Dad never let me.' Jaune thought, looking at Crocea Mors and noticing how he had a terrible grip on the sword's handle.

After a particularly horrible trip that ended up with him vomiting on some blonde girl's shoes, Jaune hoped things would get better. Yet, no sooner than he exited the bullhead, he was approached by the headmaster and vice-headmistress of the school. Without giving Jaune a chance to do anything, they took him to the headmaster's office, where they gave him a verbal lashing and lecture about how idiotic he was for trying to get into a huntsman school with zero training and forged transcripts. Afterward, they forced him to leave the premises, took his photo and transcripts, and forwarded them to the other academies so they knew to look out for him, thus meaning Jaune could never achieve his dream of becoming a huntsman.

"Yeah. They were lucky we were still around. If we weren't, I doubt there would be anything left."

'But... do I still really want to?' Jaune wondered as he watched a news reporter talk to a group of huntsmen who saved a village from Torchwick's workers and killed some Grimm that were attracted to the fight.

"I'm just glad we were called in to handle an actual threat and not arrest petty criminals the cops are called in for. Those are way below our pay grade and not worthy of our skill."

'Why do they seem so arrogant and full of themselves? I mean, just because a criminal doesn't have aura or a freaking hybrid weapon does not mean they are not dangerous. They seem like they only want to protect the light when it pays them well or gets them some fame.' Jaune thought as he continued watching the broadcast.

While probably not deliberate, Jaune could make out the other members of the huntsmen group that saved the town. Yet, while the leader was acting a bit cocky, she still tried to make it seem like she cared about the citizens. However, the others were busy counting the lien they earned from the citizens they protected. It could not be more transparent to Jaune that they were not true huntsmen but rather mercenaries for hire. Their attitude reminded Jaune of the huntsmen from earlier today and how the huntsmen-in-training at Beacon seemed stuck up and felt superior to non-huntsmen.

'Maybe it's for the best. As Mom always said, Oum has a plan for all of us. And getting rejected from Beacon is his way of showing how I am actually meant to help and protect others.' Jaune thought with a sigh. Looking at the time on the screen, he saw that it was nearing seven pm, which meant he still had a good portion of the day left. *'At least Mom and the others don't know I tried to get into Beacon. I don't even want to imagine the kind of punishment I would get because of it.'*

Knowing there was still an hour left in the flight, Jaune figured he could take a small nap.

Ninety Minutes Later

'Luckily, Mom and the others won't be back for another half-hour. Never thought I would be grateful that mini-golf existed.' Jaune thought as he entered his home and carefully closed the door behind him. "Now I just need to-"

"Put away the armor and Crocea Mors and get ready for the punishment of a lifetime." A familiar voice interjected. But even though it was familiar, Jaune could not help but tense up and feel a shiver go down his spine.

"Oh, hey, dad." Jaune said as the lights turned around while he moved to face his father. And judging by his facial expression, Jaune could tell that he was immensely infuriated. Yet, the fact his tone was neutral made it even worse.

"Sit down, Jaune." Jaune's father said, motioning for the seat across from him.

"Alright." Jaune said as he moved to sit in the chair. "So... what did you-"

"You know damn well what I want to talk about, Jaune." Jaune's father angrily said, causing Jaune to go wide-eyed. In his entire seventeen years of life, Jaune had only ever seen his father angry twice. And both of those times were toward the Council. So, to see him angry at him caused Jaune to start sweating as fear filled his eyes.

"How..."

"I am a huntsman, son. I have been one for a bit more than thirty years. In those years, I have gained friends, allies, enemies, and, most importantly, connections to what is happening around each of

the kingdoms." Jaune's father said, tapping his fingers against the armrest. "And that includes the academies."

"Oh. So you heard what happened." Jaune nervously began, scratching the back of his head. "Who could have-"

"JAUNE! WHAT IN THE NINE HELLS WERE YOU THINKING!?" Jaune's father shouted, standing up.

"I-I-" Jaune stuttered.

"I CAN TELL YOU! YOU WEREN'T! NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, YOU DIDN'T USE THE THING BETWEEN YOUR EARS! THIS ISN'T A GAME!"

"I know this isn't a game." Jaune said, slightly scared.

"DO YOU?! JAUNE! SON! THIS IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN EASILY COME BACK FROM! EVERY DECISION YOU MAKE COULD BE YOUR FINAL!"

"I know that."

"No, you don't. That's something I hate about this new wave of huntsmen-in-training. They allclaim to ' *know'* about what being a huntsman entails, but they don't actually *'KNOW'* it. Seriously, Jaune. What the hell were you thinking?"

"That I wanted to protect my sisters!" Jaune said, swallowing his fear.

"WITH WHAT?! WITH WHAT, JAUNE?!"

"With the-"

"NOTHING! THAT'S THE ANSWER! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK OZPIN OR ANY HEADMASTER WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED YOU?! YOU DON'T HAVE A WEAPON OR ARMOUR! HELL! YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FORM OF TRAINING OF ANY KIND! YOU THINK I

HAVEN'T SEEN YOU TRAINING BEHIND MY BACK?! YOU CAN BARELY DO MORE THAN FLAIL AROUND!"

"THAT WOULDN'T BE THE CASE IF YOU JUST TRAINED, BUT YOU NEVER DID!" Jaune shouted, now angry.

"BECAUSE YOU AREN'T READY FOR IT!"

"I WOULD BE IF YOU DID ANYTHING TO HELP! BUT EVERY TIME I ASKED, YOU JUST SHOOK YOUR HEAD AND LEFT! EVERY TIME I TRIED TO AT LEAST LEARN SOMETHING... ANYTHING, YOU CAME IN AND SHUT IT DOWN!"

"AND IF I HADN'T, YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN HURT!"

"AND I WOULD HAVE LEARNED FROM IT TO BECOME BETTER!"

"NO! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE!"

"YES, I WOULD HAVE! AND EVERYTHING I WOULD HAVE LEARNED, I WOULD HAVE USED TO PROTECT MY SISTERS AND EVERYONE ELSE I CARE ABOUT!"

"YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IN THE FIRST PLACE! YOU HAVE NO SKILL WHATSOEVER! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN GOTTEN PASSED THE INITIATION TEST! AND IF BY SOME OUM GIVEN MIRACLE YOU DO SURVIVE, YOU WOULD HAVE LASTED NOT EVEN A WEEK! I WOULD HAVE HAD TO GO TO BEACON AND DRAG YOUR CASTED BODY BACK HERE BECAUSE OF YOUR LACK OF COMBAT AND SOCIAL SKILLS! I WOULD HAVE NEEDED TO HIRE A SPECIAL TEACHER JUST SO YOU CAN SURVIVE LEARNING THE BASICS!"

"I GUESS THAT JUST MEANS THAT HUNCH I ALWAYS HAD ABOUT YOU NOT TRAINING ME WAS RIGHT! I AM A FAILURE IN YOUR EYES THAT CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT!" Jaune shouted, tears in his eyes. His father seemed hurt by what his son said. Yet, before he could say anything, Jaune raced out of the house.

"Damn it." Jaune's father sighed as the door slammed shut.

"Well, you certainly did mess that up, Jett." Aurelia Arc said as she entered the room, clearly annoyed with what had just happened.

"I did, didn't I." Jett said, sighing as he calmed down.

"You did. You might be many things, Jett. A good cook, a good tracker, a good huntsman, a good... many things. But being subtle or knowing how to handle a delicate subject is not one of them. While that might help when dealing with the Council or some arrogant huntsmen or huntsmen-in-training, it is crap when it comes to everything else." Aurelia said, glaring at her husband. "You could have done so much better. But you botched it."

"I was just trying to protect our son. I want him to be safe."

"And you think I don't." Aurelia growled, her aura flaring. "I care for Jaune, Saphron... all of our children. Every day, I make sure they are happy, healthy, clothed, and well-fed. I make sure that as they get older, I teach them everything they need to know to face the world when they finally decide to leave the nest. I make sure every day that I let them know that I love them deeply and want only the best for them."

"I know, Aurelia. And I cannot thank you enough for doing that. I just don't want to see any of our kids get hurt. It's just... ***SIGHS*** In my years as a huntsman, I have seen so many horrifying things that have scarred me for life. And the people who *supposedly* swore to protect the light were even worse at times. It was so bad that I sometimes wondered if I had made the right decision in becoming a huntsman. Sometimes, I wonder if I should have gone down the path my father wanted and become a dust researcher."

"I know, dear. You have sacrificed so much for Remnant and got hardly anything in return." Aurelia said, moving to stand beside her husband and grabbing his hand.

"I just don't want Jaune to have to go through that. He has such a pure soul. I know he wants to make a difference and be able to protect his sisters, whom he cares so much for. But... being a huntsman is a very burdening task with such a high turnover rate. That's why Remnant had such a low number of huntsmen in recent years. Every morning, I pray to Oum that I return from my mission, and every night, I thank him for letting me see it through. And no parent should have to bury their child."

"I know, dear. I know. It should be the child that buries the parent, not the other way around. And I know those are the reasons why you never let Jaune train and refused to sign him up for any of the academies or even self-defense classes."

"Yes. As much as it pained me to keep our son from following his dream, I knew it was one of the better decisions. Although, in hindsight, I should have at least allowed him to take a few self-defense classes."

"True. But at least it's not too late to give him some, especially since you're here."

"And I can definitely teach him a lot better than the so-called businessmen that call themselves self-defense experts." Jett chuckled, recalling all the martial arts 'masters' he had seen in his time as a huntsman. While some did know what they were doing, many others did not. They just printed out the correct documents, got a fake certificate from one of those questionable websites, and opened up a dojo. He honestly took great pleasure in exposing them for the frauds they were. "Still. While I can give him a few lessons, you know he is stubborn. Jaune isn't going to give up."

"I know how stubborn he can get since he got it from you, after all." Aurelia said, causing Jett to roll his eyes. "But Jaune is still young. I know he wants to protect people, especially his sisters, and make a difference. And while becoming a huntsman is definitely one way, there are many other paths he could take, like becoming a paramedic, doctor, or even a firefighter."

"Those are options and, most of the time, are a lot safer than being a huntsman."

"But in order to convince Jaune to take a different path, we need to have a talk with him as a family that loves and only wants the best for him. But for that to happen, we need him here."

"Right. And once I bring him back, we can discuss our next step."

"As a family. Now, go get our son back." Aurelia said, kissing her husband. Nodding, Jett grabbed his armor and weapon as a just in case before dashing out of the house. After he closed the door, Aurelia sighed. Yet, she could not help the smile that formed on her face. "They are probably going to be tired once they get back. I should probably make something for us. I have a strong feeling that good things are going to come our way."

Thirty Minutes Later

'Why? Why? Why does my dad not believe in me? Why doesn't he want me to become a huntsman?' Jaune wondered as he walked the lonely, cold nights of Vale.

Sighing, Jaune took the final bite out of his dark chocolate comfort food before throwing the wrapper away in a nearby bin. Shoving his hands into his pockets, Jaune continued walking around his hometown with no real destination in mind. Yet, Jaune knew at one point, he had to return home and... talk with his father again. But Jaune also knew that it would be for the best if he waited a bit for everything to cool down before heading home. Otherwise, it would just lead to an argument with nothing getting done.

'I know I don't know everything about being a huntsman. But isn't that the point of the academies!? To learn how to be a huntsman and how to protect the people and light from the darkness and creatures of Grimm!' Jaune thought, annoyed. *'Besides. It's not like I would have signed up for the most dangerous missions, like clearing out Mount Glenn or anything like that. I just want to be able to protect my*

sisters. I don't want them to get hurt. And being a huntsman would let me ensure they and everyone I care about are safe.'

However, Jaune then suddenly began doubting if that was the right path. He remembered earlier how some huntsmen scoffed and left when some thugs were mugging him. Then there was the broadcast Jaune saw on the bullhead where some huntsmen practically all but said that they only protected people and the light when it benefited them or got them a lot of lien. And that they only bothered with significant threats like the Grimm or criminals like Torchwick, who had their aura unlocked while the police could handle every other threat or criminal. Yet, Jaune knew from the reports and stories his father had told him that the police were often outgunned, outnumbered, and helpless against certain criminals and criminal organizations that clearly needed huntsmen's help to take them down. But most didn't even bat an eye as they left for something that was actually 'worth' their time and skill.

"Maybe Dad was right. Maybe being a huntsman isn't the best path. Still. I want to protect my sisters. Perhaps I can get Dad to teach me something so I can defend myself and others." Jaune said with a sigh. Even though he still wanted to become a huntsman, Jaune knew that was next to impossible now. However, that did not mean he couldn't find other ways. With that in mind, Jaune turned around and began making his way home. *'I just hope Dad has calmed down by now. Oh, Oum. Mom and my sisters are probably home by now. Mom is definitely going to give me an earful once I get home. And don't get me started on Coral. She is probably-'*

BAM

'Shit! That was a gunshot sound!' Jaune thought, worried.

Despite crime being on the rise and a constant throughout Remnant, Jaune knew his hometown was generally on the lower side, especially since there was a lot of active and retired military personnel living there. So, to hear a gun going off this late at night was strange and frightening, to say the least. Yet, against his better

judgment, Jaune figured he should check it out to see if someone needed help or if it was a robbery, and he needed to alert the authorities.

Swallowing the lump in his throat, Jaune took out his scroll and raced toward where the gunshot sound came from. Thankfully, despite it being late at night, Jaune easily saw where he was going due to the street lamps. Yet, he could not shake off the dreadful and foreboding feeling that seemed to lurk in the air. And the heinous cackling that Jaune heard sent shivers down his spine and nearly caused him to turn back. But he pushed forward.

'Hopefully, I'm not too late.' Jaune thought, keeping close to the buildings as he ran to where the gunshot sound came from. This way, he could duck back into cover and safety to avoid getting spotting. After a few moments, he turned the corner and...

... came across a horrifying sight.

"DAD!" Jaune shouted when he spotted his father in a puddle of his own blood.

Dropping his scroll, Jaune raced over to where his father lay on the ground. Once he got closer, Jaune saw that his father had numerous life-threatening wounds all over his body. Kneeling, Jaune inspected his father's bloodied body. There were hundreds of lacerations. His father's rib cage seemed to be caved in. The bones in his left hand seemed to have been grounded to dust, while his shoulder appeared to have been dislocated and removed from its socket. His right foot was bent to face the opposite direction, while his right knee was forcibly inverted. One of his father's eyes was gone while the blood coming from the top of his head and remaining hair told Jaune that someone tried to scalp his father but failed horribly.

Lifting his father's shirt, Jaune gasped and nearly threw up at what he saw. On his father's stomach was a crudely carved J. Right above it were three holes, two of which seemed to have been made from bullets. However, it was the third that made Jaune nearly lose his

lunch as his father's assailants used a gutting tool to stab his father and pull out some internal organs.

"DAD! DAD! SHIT! CAN YOU HEAR ME!? DON'T LEAVE ME! YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE! SHIT! WHERE DID I DROP MY SCROLL? HANG ON! I'M GOING TO CALL YOU AN AMBULANCE!" Jaune shouted, desperately looking around for his scroll while shaking his father. However, right before he could get up to find his scroll, Jaune felt something warm grab his hand. Looking down, Jaune saw that his father had grabbed his hand. "DAD!"

"J-Jaune." Jett weakly said, blood dripping out of his mouth. "I-I'm sorry. I-I l-love you. Be strong. Take c-care-"

BAM

"NO!" Jaune shouted, distraught as his father was killed right before his eyes, his head now open with some of his brain spilling out onto the road. Turning to his right, Jaune saw a crazed man dressed in a clown costume, laughing as he held a pistol that had smoke coming out of the barrel. "YOU BASTARD!"

"HA HA HA! Don't worry, kid. We already had our fun. So I won't bother with you. I'll just let you rejoin your father." The figure said, aiming his gun at Jaune's head.

However, before the figure could pull the trigger, they heard a loud screeching sound rapidly growing louder. Turning to where it was coming from, Jaune and the figure shielded their eyes when bright lights suddenly appeared. Not even a second later, the source revealed itself to be a strange black car. The figure immediately raised his gun and fired at the vehicle, but it had no effect. Seeing this, the figure attempted to dive out of the way but failed as the car sped up and rammed into him, sending him flying and crashing into a building. Confused and worried, Jaune was about to drag his father's lifeless body away but didn't get far when the car's door opened with a computer screen coming to life. And on it was a green line.

'Get in. Now!' A voice said, probably coming from the computer as the green line moved like how Jaune saw in the movies.

"Uh..." Jaune said, unsure of what to say while looking at his father's dead body.

'There's nothing you can do for him now. He's gone. I have already called in services to take his body to the morgue. GET IN NOW! The others who did this might not be far off.'

Knowing he had no choice, Jaune said a quick prayer and goodbye to his father before hopping into the mysterious car. And as soon as he was inside, the door closed, with the vehicle speeding off shortly after. Jaune was about to ask the person where they were going but saw that the computer screen had turned off. Seeing that he was alone and probably had time before wherever the mysterious person was taking him, Jaune broke down and let out everything that was within him.

One Hour Later

'Where the hell am I?' Jaune wondered as the car came to a stop inside a cave.

However, it was not like any cave he had seen before. Granted, Jaune hadn't been in many caves during his life on Remnant. But he doubted any of the numerous caves on Remnant had an advanced secret base in them. With a hiss, the car's door opened, allowing Jaune to exit. Stepping out, Jaune looked around in amazement at what he saw. There were hundreds of gadgets that he doubted any of the Kingdoms could ever hope to achieve in his lifetime. Yet, some of the symbols on them seemed strange but vaguely familiar.

"Done sightseeing?" A gruff-sounding voice asked, startling Jaune. Turning to where it came from, Jaune saw an elderly male with white hair sitting on a chair before a computer.

"Uh. Who are you?" Jaune asked, curious. But as soon as he asked this, Jaune instantly recognized him. "Wait a minute. You're Bruce Wayne. The CEO of Wayne Enterprises."

"That's right. And you are Jaune Arc, the son of Jett and Aurelia Arc." Bruce said, getting up and walking over to Jaune with his cane in his left hand.

"How do you know my name and... my parents?" Jaune asked, stifling a sniffle.

"Research. Well, for the most part. I have met your father before on two occasions when we were both much younger."

"But... why have you brought me here? How did you know what was happening? Who were the assholes that killed my father? What's going on?" Jaune asked, his voice becoming angrier and more broken.

"Look. I'll get right to the point as we don't have much time. Have you ever heard of the Batman?"

"Of course. He has helped keep the streets safe by arresting and stopping the criminals and organizations that the huntsmen never bothered to deal with... which I am just now realizing is almost all of them." Jaune answered before whispering the last part. Yet, Bruce heard it clearly, causing him to let out a disappointed sigh. "But he disappeared a while back, and no one knows why."

"And I'm pretty sure you already know I am the Batman, considering how you spotted several of my symbols already."

"Yeah. But what really told me you were the Batman were the suits in the containers over there." Jaune said, pointing to the pods that contained the infamous Batsuit.

"Well, you're right. I am Batman. And the reason why I haven't been around much being because of the one thing no one can escape.

And that is aging. I tried to prolong my time as Batman by creating new suits to compensate for my aging body. However, after a rough encounter, I knew it was time for me to pass down the mantle of Batman to a successor."

"Yeah. No one can stop Father Time. I even remember hearing stories about you fighting crime nearly a decade before I was born. But why are you telling me this?"

"As I just said, it is time for a successor to take up the mantle of being Batman. I began scouring all over Remnant for the next suitable candidate. And after a few months of research, I landed on you, Jaune.

"Wait. You're choosing me?" Jaune asked, shocked and confused.

"Yes. I'm choosing you, Jaune. I have kept tabs on you ever since you were seven. You have what I am looking for."

"Why me? Not that I don't feel honored, but there have to be lots of others who are more... qualified than me. Like some huntsmen or some people at Atlas."

"In specific aspects and fields like combat, yes. There would be thousands of better choices. However, if all it took to be the Caped Crusader was knowing how to fight, then anyone could become Batman. But there is more to being Batman than just that. The Batman protects civilians and swears vengeance against the criminals that plague Remnant. Others fight within the curfew of the law; we fight for justice, which is almost never the same thing. While the law has helped numerous times, it is also impressively faulty, as hundreds of criminals have gotten off scot-free or with a simple slap on the wrist. This is if the police even manage to capture them in the first place or if the huntsmen decide to actually deal with them. I'm positive you have seen that first hand, right?"

"Yeah. I got mugged earlier today, and some nearby huntsmen didn't bother to help. Then I saw a broadcast about some huntsmen

protecting a village but admitting they only did it for the lien and because it was worthy of their time."

"And that leads me to another thing. Most would not hesitate to kill or would deliberately attempt to kill any criminal they face. I do not. The Batman does not. Unless the person is far too dangerous to let live, we do not kill anyone. Otherwise, we'd become the very thing we swore vengeance against, and the bad guys win."

"True." Jaune said, seeing some truth behind it. "Plus. Some are mentally unwell and/or just need help. They don't deserve to die."

'I should probably not bring up the Joker just yet.' Bruce thought. "Exactly. It is more common than you would think. And that also leads me to another reason why I chose you."

"What is it?"

"Throughout your life, you always wanted to become a huntsman. But unlike others, you have only wanted to do so to protect your family. Nothing else. Most would have wanted fame, money, or used it as a way to get a different job, like a bounty hunter. You just wanted your family safe. Not once did any other reason come to your mind."

"That's right. I only have ever wanted my family safe." Jaune said, upset with himself. Had he listened or stayed at home, his father would still be alive.

"Now tell me. When you saw one of the people that killed your father, what went through your mind?"

"Anger, rage, sadness, confusion... a lot. I wanted to beat him for hurting and killing my father."

"Yet, did the thought of taking his life enter your mind?"

"No. I wanted to beat him to a pulp. I wanted him to feel the pain he caused me and my dad. But I did not want to kill him. That's... just not me." Jaune answered, fighting back tears.

"It isn't. And that's what I mean by restraint. Nearly everyone else would have killed brutally killed him. Many would let their emotions, past experiences, biases, or other outside factors control their actions and motives. And many others would follow up with a kill if presented during a brutal fight. Yet, you wouldn't. You stayed with your morals, whereas nearly everyone else wouldn't."

"I guess so."

"And all this ultimately leads me to pick you as my successor. There is more to the Batman than most would think. We protect the innocent and swear vengeance against the criminals that plague Remnant, yet we do not kill or expect anything in return. Being Batman means you bring justice, not law and order. We stand up for what is right, not what the law says is legal. We show restraint and control where others would fall. We are the beacon in the darkness. That is what it means to be the Batman. You have all of that."

"But what about-"

"Don't worry. Despite what some might say, we all start at the same point. When I first started training, I could hardly throw a punch. I'll teach you everything I know. Be warned, though. It will be brutal." Bruce Wayne said, turning to face Jaune and looking him directly in the eyes. "Now. Tell me, Jaune. Are you willing to take on the mantle and become the new Batman?"

Jaune felt a whirlwind of emotions inside him, which wasn't help that he still felt like a mess from seeing his father killed before his very eyes. Yet, Jaune remembered and knew what his father was trying to tell him before the clown killed him. And it was to protect his family, which was his primary reason for attempting to attend Beacon Academy. While being a huntsman was no longer an option, Jaune knew that even if it were, it wouldn't be enough. Plus, he wanted to

protect *everyone* whenever they needed it, not when it only benefited him like the huntsmen on the broadcast did. And if being the Batman was the best option, then so be it. With a final breath, Jaune looked at Bruce in the eyes and gave him his answer.

"Yes."

Notes:

A request from volcasiron30